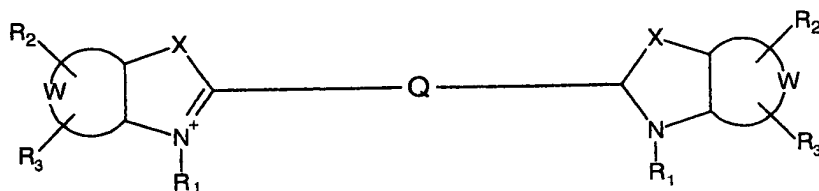## ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A symmetric cyanine of the formula:
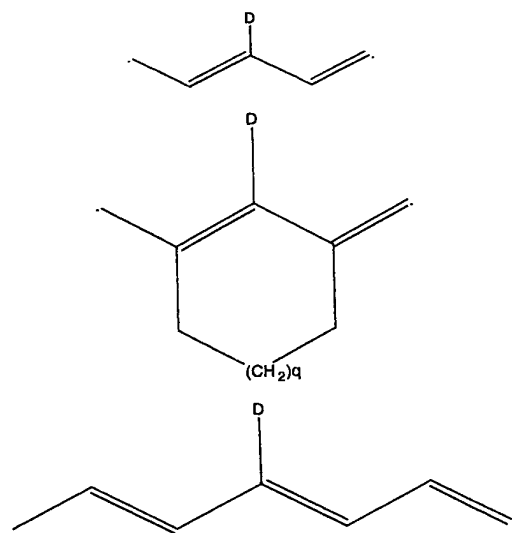

(1)

wherein:

X is selected from the group consisting of O, S and $C(CH_3)_2$;

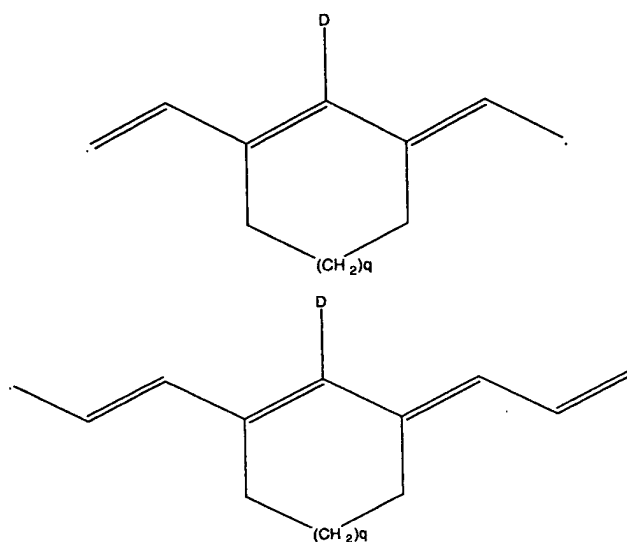W represents non-metal atoms required to form a benzo-condensed or a naphto-condensed ring;

R_1 is selected from the group consisting of $(CH_2)_nCH_3$, $(CH_2)_nSO_3^-$ and $(CH_2)_nSO_3H$, wherein n is an integer selected from 0 to 6 when R_1 is $(CH_2)_nCH_3$, and n is an integer selected from 3 to 6 when R_1 is $(CH_2)_nSO_3^-$ or $(CH_2)_nSO_3H$;

R_2 and R_3 are independently selected from the group consisting of H, a sulphonic moiety and a sulphonate moiety;
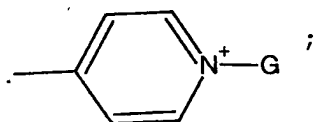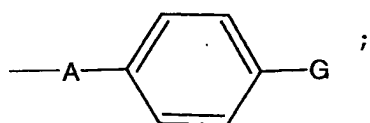
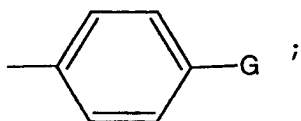Q is selected from the group consisting of:

wherein q is 0 or 1 and D is selected from the group consisting of:

$-C \equiv C-G;$ and

wherein A is O or S and G is, or contains a N, O or S nucleophile moiety or is, or contains a moiety capable of reacting with N, O or S nucleophiles.